

U.S. Patent No. 10/697,765
Response to Office Action of April 20, 2007

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 remain in this application. Claims 1, 6 and 12 have been amended. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In response Applicant has amended Claims 1 and 12 to address the Examiner's objections. Claim 6 has been amended to reflect a similar change as in Claim 1 step (e).

Claims 1-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by Schmidt, V et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,322,315) ("Schmidt").

In Schmidt, the sheet stretching board 48 does not support the stack being formed. Moreover, in Schmidt the sheet stretching board 48 does not move under the stack for all the stack width. Independent Claims 1 and 6 have been amended to reflect that the sheet stretching board 48 moves under the stack for all the stack width.

In addition, in Schmidt the wing exceeding separator 50 is on the very left of the stack width. Instead, in the pending claims 1, 6 the wing exceeding separators 10 and 20 are between the two separators, and therefore it cannot be at the very left of the stack width.

Regarding Claim 12, the latter difference is also clear, because the wing exceeding separators 10 and 20 is hanging at half the stack width.

Therefore, Schmidt does not anticipate Applicant's invention as presently claimed.

Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hauschild et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,730,695) ("Hauschild") in view of Schmidt, V. et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,322,315) ("Schmidt").

One technical problem existing in the art to be solved is to have multiple options of folding the wing hanging between two separators. Such problem has not heretofore been fully appreciated nor effectively and efficiently solved.

In Hauschild discloses only one option, with the wing starting from half the width.

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In Schmidt discloses two options, that is, with the wing starting from left up to the middle of the width, or a double fold starting from the left up to $\frac{1}{4}$ of the width and back, by using the sheet stretching board 48.

In contrast, the present invention provides a multiplicity of options.

At a high production rate, the problem arises that the two separators have to move quickly back to an upwards position just below the folding rollers, as shown in Figs. 1 and 2 in the present application. They are free to move back (Figs. 5 and 6) as soon as the sheet stretching board 15 supports provisionally the stack as provided in Fig. 4.

This is very important in cases of high production rate, because in the situation of Fig. 4, the stack being formed is almost ready for being separated, and if the separators 10 and 20 are busy, because they are supporting the stack, they of course cannot be ready to separate a new stack. If separators 10 and 20 could not move back quickly, the production rate should be decreased to wait them.

In Schmidt separators 38 and 40 are supported integrally to stretching board fingers 46 and 50. Therefore, they cannot move back until table 10, 36 is back. In fact, finger 46 do not support the stack. Even in case finger 46 supported the stack, fingers 46 and 50, along with separators 38 and 40, could not move back upwards, because finger 46 is arranged on a same supporting means. Therefore, a structural modification should be necessary in Schmidt.

In Hauschild, there are only two separators 11 and 12 inserted for about half of the stack width to separate and to support the stack. Therefore, in Hauschild it is not possible to move separators 11 and 12 back quickly until table 22 and 23 is back. Moreover, in Hauschild no sheet stretching board is present. No suggestion is made in Schmidt to insert a sheet stretching board for all the stack width to support the stack and leave free the separators to turn back below the folding rollers to start a new separation.

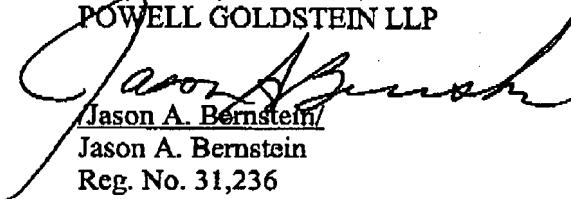
Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that no prima facie case of obviousness has been made out in the combination of Hauschild and Schmidt.

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CONCLUSION

Applicant submits that the patent application is in condition for allowance and respectfully requests such action. If the Examiner has any questions that can be answered by telephone, please contact the patent attorney of record at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,
POWELL GOLDSTEIN LLP



Jason A. Bernstein
Jason A. Bernstein
Reg. No. 31,236

One Atlantic Center, Fourteenth Floor
1201 West Peachtree Street, NW
Atlanta, GA 30309-3488
(404) 572-6900
(404) 572-6999 (fax)
jbernstein@pogolaw.com
#1199190